

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3498
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
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AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 5555

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, JM
SUBJECT: REFORMS: MANLEY INQUIRES, SEAGA SUGGESTS, 21 DETENUS
BENEFIT

1. IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF LAST WEEK'S ELECTION,
PRIME MINISTER MICHAEL MANLEY TOLD HIS UNSUCCESSFUL OPPONENT,
EDDIE SEAGA OF THE JAMAICAN LABOUR PARTY (JLP), AT A MEETING
HELD LAST FRIDAY (DECEMBER 17) THAT HE WOULD WELCOME RENEWED
DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE JLP AND THE VICTORIOUS PEOPLE'S NATIONAL
PARTY (PNP) REGARDING THE "DISTRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT BENEFITS
SUCH AS JOBS AND HOUSING". SEAGA RESPONDED PROMPTLY, SETTING
FORTH EIGHT PROPOSALS. IN ADDITION TO AGREEING THAT GOVERN-
MENT BENEFITS MUST BE DISTRIBUTED ON A NON-PARTISAN BASIS,
SEAGA CALLED FOR:

(A) ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLICE COMMISSION TO INSURE AGAINST
POLITICAL USE OF THE POLICE;

(B) ESTABLISHMENT OF A AUTONOMOUS ELECTORAL COMMISSION
WHICH WOULD CONDUCT ELECTIONS AND UNDERTAKE AS
NECESSARY, RE-DISTRICTING.

(C) CREATION OF AN EXPENDITURES COMMITTEE OF PARLIA-
MENT TO SCRUTINIZE EXPENDITURES BY GOVERNMENT TO INSURE
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THAT THEY ARE MADE FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES;
(E) ADDITIONAL POWERS FOR THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
OF PARLIAMENT SO THAT STATUTORY BODIES AND PUBLIC CORPORA-
TIONS ARE MADE SUBJECT TO FISCAL SCRUTINY;
(E) CREATION OF A CONTRACTS COMMITTEE TO INSURE GOVERN-
MENT CONTRACTS ARE AWARDED PROPERLY;

(F) ENACTMENT OF A "FAIR OPPORTUNITIES ACT" AND RELATED "CODES OF CONDUCT" TO INSURE AGAINST ABUSE OF PRIVATE CITIZENS ARISING OUT OF THEIR CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENT AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS; AND
(G) EARLY REVIEW OF DETENTION ORDERS WITH THE AIM OF RELEASING THOSE WHO ARE NOT "HARD CORE CASES".

2. IN HIS REPLY TO SEAGA'S PROPOSALS, SENT ON DECEMBER 21, MANLEY NOTED THAT SUCH PROPOSALS AS THOSE FOR AN EXPENDITURES COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT AND AN EXTENSION OF THE JURISDICTION OF THE ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT REQUIRE LEGISLATIVE ACTION AND THUS MUST AWAIT THE CONVENING OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT. REGARDING THE PROPOSALS TO CREATE POLICE AND ELECTION COMMISSIONS, AND TO ACHIEVE NON-PARTISAN DISPENSATION OF GOVERNMENT BENEFITS, THE PRIME MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT SEAGA HAD ALREADY FORMED STUDY GROUPS TO CONSIDER TERMS OF REFERENCE, AND STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE AIDED IN STUDYING THE ISSUE IF IT HAD THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY GROUPS' DELIBERATIONS.

3. MANLEY THEN CLOSED WITH A FAINT BARB WHEN HE CALLED SEAGA'S ATTENTION TO A NEWS RELEASE FROM THE "COMPETENT AUTHORITY" UNDER THE EMERGENCY REGULATIONS WHICH ANNOUNCED THE RELEASE OF 21 DETENUS. MANLEY ASSERTED THAT DETENTION ORDERS REMAIN UNDER CONTINUOUS REVIEW, AND ADDED THAT A FURTHER REVIEW WILL BE COMPLETED WITHIN A DAY OR SO. HE THEN CALLED ON SEAGA TO FULFILL HIS PROMISE TO MAKE "PERSONAL AND PUBLIC" PLEAS TO THOSE RELEASED TO JUSTIFY THEIR RELEASE BY EXEMPLARY CONDUCT. THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT THE RELEASES WERE IN RESPONSE TO SEAGA'S
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PROPOSALS; RATHER, MANLEY'S COMMENTS WERE INTENDED TO SUGGEST THAT THE "COMPETENT AUTHORITY" IS WELL AHEAD OF SEAGA.
GERARD

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NNN

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